

## [George Bede]

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Gauthier, Sheldon [F?].

Rangelore

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[FEC?]

George [Bede?], 61, living at 310 [?.?]. Third St., Fort Worth, Tex., was born on a farm in [Cabine?] co., Tex. His father, Gilbert [Bede?], and family joined a colony that emigrated to New Mexico in 1877. Albert [Bede?] found employment on the Jinglebob Ranch, five mi. [?]. of Roswell, owned by John Chisum. He worked on this ranch for five years, housing his family in a shack near the ranch. He left the Jinglebob to work for Pat Garrett. George [Bede?] spent his childhood on the two ranches and at the age of 15 returned to Tex., where he [secured?] employment on the Blue Mountain Ranch, owned by John [Garfor?] and located W. of Midland, Tex. After leaving the Blue Mountain, he worked for the '[7D?]' Ranch, owned by the Wilson brothers and located 50 mi. N. of San Angelo, Tex., and embracing 192,000 acres, all under fence. On leaving the [7D?]'s, he joined the outfit of the 'BF' Ranch, owned by B.F. Wallace, also located in the San Angelo area. Thereafter, he worked for various stock farmers the remainder of his active life. His story:

"My father's name was Albert [Bede?], and he lived on a farm in [Sabine?] co., Tex., where I was born April 1, 1876.

"The following year, 1877, there was a colony of folks got together for a drag out to New Mexico. Among the crowd was my father's family. My father landed a job with the

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Jinglebob Ranch. The ranch was given this name because they marked the critters by cutting a muscle in the ears, and that caused the animals' ears to flop down and would jingle and bob as they walked. The ranch was owned by 'Cow' John Chisum. Father nested on that outfit for five years. The outfit was located five miles east of Roswell, N. Mex. [??]

"The camp where father was working was the main outfit. The Jinglebob outfit had many camps and several in that section of N. Mex. 2 "Father provided a shack for the family to live in, near the ranch. The only things I saw while growing up were critters, cowhands and wild animals. What I heard, besides the voice of the humans, were the howls of the wolves, caterwauls of the catamounts, bellowing of the critters, and the singing of the birds. My playing was done with a lasso, pretending I was riding a hose and [smearing?] the rope over the critters, until I became big enough to ride; and then I used a hoss and used critters for my play.

"After the five years nesting period father put in at the Jinglebob outfit, he went to work for Pat Garrett. Pat run an irrigated farm, as well as a cow camp, but father worked on the farm. I was a kid of six years, then.

"While in that section of the country I met 'Billy the Kid', the notorious bad man of that section in those days. He worked for ranchers in that section and among them was the Jinglebob outfit. He worked there for a spell while father was with the outfit.

"During the spell of time I was growing up in that section, I often met the Kid and heard father and the other cowhands talking about him many times.

"Whenever I met him he acted mighty decent and 'twas generally said about him that he never turned a fellow down that was up against it and called for a little help. But, also, the folks 'lowed he would shoot a man just to see the fellow give the dying kick. 'Twas said

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he got a powerful lot of amusement out of watching a fellow, that he didn't like, twist and groan. 3 Anyway, it was well known by all he did plenty shooting.

“Another thing I often heard [chin?] about was that he was a dependable fellow to use in settling long standing accounts between the ranch owners and cowhands. In those days a [greener?] would be stood off for his pay by some of the ranchmen. Cash was hard to get at times, and when it was scarce the settlement with the [greener?] would be delayed at times on general principles. In some cases the accounts would run from six months on to two years. The cowhand would be paid a little along, enough to buy '[baccy?]' and such.

“Some would start squawking sooner than others. In many cases, so it was told (and no one denied it as not being the fact), when a greener went to squawking too hard Billy the Kid would be called upon to settle the account.

“The settlement would be made by sending the greener out with the Kid to pull a critter out of a bog. The Kid would send the greener into the bog to tie the rope on the animal. While the party was making the tie the Kid would load him so full of lead that the fellow would also become bogged down.

“Father told me that, while he never seen Billy do any of the settling, he did personally see several fellows that got to squawking and suddenly disappeared. The last seen of the fellows they were riding off with the Kid.

“While we lived on the Pat Garrett place, Billy came there several times, on invitations from Pat. You see, Pat had been a partner of Bill's before Pat went to farming and ranching. Under some sort of an arrangement, Pat surrendered and was not sent to prison. After a short spell of time Pat was appointed 4 to a U.S. Marshal's position. Some folks say that he was sheriff, but I am sure that during the middle 80's he was U.S. Marshal.

“When Pat became a law, he sent for Billy the Kid and had him come to the farm for a talk. He promised the Kid that he would not arrest him and would let him return to his

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hangout, if Pat's shape up was not to the Kid's way of thinking. Pat was hankering to have the Kid give up under some sort of compromise. The Kid made several calls and each time he called I heard some of the chinning. Garrett failed to pound it into the Kid's conk that it would be best for him to change his way of living. I guess the Kid hankered for his amusement of watching shot men kick and groan, and liked his work of settling long standing wage accounts.

"I am sure father and I heard the last words the two men said on the subject of the Kid's surrender. As my recollection has it, the Kid never dragged to the farm again. The Kid was mounted and ready to leave and Pat said to him:

"Billy, you can see it my way I guess?"

"No Pat," the Kid said.

"Well, you understand I have to either resign or kill you and I am not going to resign'.

"You mean that you'll try to kill me', the Kid answered while laughing; and then he rode off saying. 'So long, pardner'".

"It was some spell after that last call of the Kid's when Pat killed the fellow. The Kid was cornered in a Mexican's shack and there Pat made his word good when Billy refused to surrender. 5 "When I was 13 years old I dragged back to Texas. I lit in the Midland section and joined up with the [?] outfit, owned by John Garfor. The outfit was located in the Blue Mountain country about 50 miles north of Midland.

"Of all the outfits that I have nested on, that '[?]' was the top in several ways. I never will forget the outfit. The first work I did was to help brand some critters. Garfor said: 'I have 25 of the [White?] Hoss critters to brand'. He had worked for [White?] Hoss outfit, which was located about 10 miles away. The owner had died and Garfor took the job of ranging the

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cattle for the man's wife. It was agreed that he should receive 100 cows for doing the job, so he said.

"I stayed with the outfit 18 months. The first day we branded 10 of the 25 that he said were to get the iron. Well, I branded on an average of five critters a day for the whole 18 months and the day before I left the outfit he told me he had 70 of the White Hoss critters left to brand.

"That was the toughest branding job I ever tackled. The more of those critters I branded, the greater became the number that was left to brand, which he claimed was his share of the 100 critters. I was making less progress then a frog jumping out of a well. In addition to his way of figuring, he had the best breeding stock I ever saw or helped to handle. When I landed on the outfit he had just started his outfit and had 500 critters. During the 18 months time I was there the number had increased to several thousand, and he never bought a critter.

"Water holes were scarce in that country and Garfor had 6 windmills pumping water, and around those mills he built a fence. The critters that came for water could be held inside of the fence. I noticed that every time a good looking critter with a calf came for water, that had some other brand, he would say:

"That's one of the White Hoss critters, and I still have some coming; put the '[?]' iron on it'.

"During bad luck, I am sure Garfor made a success with his ranch. I didn't stay to see how he came out, because I was running behind with my branding. I still had 70 to brand, out of the original 25, so I quit before I got farther in the hole. "I then drifted over to the '[?]' outfit, which was owned by the Wilson brothers and located 50 miles north of San Angelo, on the Colorado River. That ranch is still running, but the name has been changed to the Scrugg Ranch. I worked there a few years ago, in 1932 to be exact.

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"The '7D' had several cow camps. The one where I nested was the main camp and run critters over 300 sections of land. When I went to work on the 7D, it was in the 90's and the range was fenced. My job was fence riding.

"I rode and examined the fence for a distance of 15 miles each day for six days, and on the seventh day I rode the whole 90 miles. When I found a piece of fence needing to be fixed, I reported it and a crew would go out to do the repair work. [Then?] just a loose wire, or some other trifling matter, I would repair it. I carried a hammer, pliers and staples to do the small repair jobs.

"I had one hoss that could make that 90 mile trip from sun 6 to sun. The animal was a hoss weighing about 800 pounds and that hoss could easily canter all day. But, after that drag, I placed the hoss in the pen and let it rest until the next trip. I used that hoss for those runs for a spell of two years and he did not seem any the worse for wear at the end of the time.

"The '[7D?]' outfit was sort of different from the old open range outfits. On the open ranges the ranchmen worked, as steady hands, three waddies to the 1,000 critters, then at roundup time extra hands would be taken on. On the open range the boys lived behind the chuck wagon most of the time and slept in the open. Critters belonging to several outfits would be found mixed and at the roundups there would be the waddies from several outfits working together cutting out the various brands. Those critters would be bunched, according to their brand, branded and drifted back to their proper range.

"On the '[7D?]' five steady hands did the work of handling several thousand head and the waddies were in most every night. The waddies working the fenced range had a snap compared with the fellow that worked the open range.

When I was a kid and father worked for Chisum, the waddies had to fight the drifting herd and stampedes at times. There was the night riding to do that called for men with [sand?] in their gizzards.

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"In New Mexico, and in Texas, the ranchmen of a section built drift fences, which helped a tolerable lot in taking care of the drifts. Before a spell of bad weather, the critters would start drifting towards shelter and keep on going until they found it, if such could be found. That called for work on the part of the waddies to hold the herd back; if the animals were not held back, they would drift for miles and become scattered.

"With the drift fence, the critters were held to a certain extent and the waddies could handle the herd better. After a storm, waddies would have to drag out and gather the herd, then drift the animals back to their grazing grounds.

"The drift fence was built leading into canyons, and other places of shelter; so when the herd started a drift the fence would lead the critters into shelter. Some of those fences were nearly 100 miles long.

"I have seen, in the fall and winter, the critters start to drift when the weather was pretty good and there was no sign of a change in sight. Father would say, 'well, we are due for a spell of weather', and the spell would sure come. Maybe it would be as much as four days off, but it would hit.

"I worked for the Littlefield outfit for a spell, after I spent a couple of years on the 7D outfit. The Littlefield had a cow camp in the San Angelo section and had several camps scattered around the country, and also had their ranges fenced. I spent a couple years there, working as a fence rider. After quitting the Littlefield outfit I worked here and there, always for some stockman.

"Six years ago I landed back on the old 7D and worked for the Scruggs outfit as a fence rider, and that was the last fence riding I ever done. 9 "I have enjoyed the work and that is why I have stayed with the cattle work, in some way, all through my life. It is an outdoor life and I always felt pert. Of course, there was not much amusement except what we got up

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for ourselves. When a greener came on to an outfit, we always had our fun breaking the fellow in.

"I recall one greener that we came near losing through our hankering to show him a good time. It was on the old 7D outfit and the boys fixed up to play the old game of snipe-hunting.. Of course the greener was given the best, or easiest, part to do, as we told him. We set him to holding the bag to catch the snipes with, off about three miles from camp. We instructed the young fellow to stay right quiet at that point, because the rest of us were going to make a wide circle, which might take a tolerable lot of time, depending on how soon we would jump a flock of snipe. As you know, the game is to go on home and let the bag holder stay put until he decides to quit, or just quit because he can't stand it any longer.

"This particular night was made to order, because, shortly after we had the boy set, the wolves began to howl a plenty, and the [catamounts?] began to cry. To a fellow that is not used to such, those weirdhowls and cat calls will sure raise the bristles.

"After the fellow had been there for the time we calculated any human could stand it, and he failed to show up, we went after him, but we found he had left the stand. Well, we found him the next day 50 miles away from camp and not knowing where 10 he was. He said that, when the wolves and cats started to serenade, he just lit out, trying to get away from the animals, and never thought of the direction until later and then didn't know where he was.

"That kind of hoss play was pulled considerable; and the the boys had shooting, riding, bulldogging and roping matches, that whiled away a tolerable lot of time.

"The best shot I know of was Ruff Young, who worked on the 7D outfit. He could ride a hoss on a dead run and put five out six shots into a tree limb and do the shooting from the hip.



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“The top roper was Joe Posey, who worked for the Slaughter outfit that had a ranch a piece out of San Angelo. He could handle a rope the best of any man I ever lamped do rope work. That fellow could do a loop with his foot, which I never saw anyone else do. He would put the loop over the toe of his boot, then flip it over a critters head as pretty as you would want it done. It was seldom that a critter could hornswoggle Posey out of a loop.

“The best rider was Jim Miles, who worked for the Scoggins outfit, in the San Angelo section. Also, I was reckoned as tops when it came to riding and horse hunting. I never was spilled but once, after I learned to ride, and I busted many a mustang.

“Besides roping, riding and the likes, for our fun, poker-playing was one of the main pastimes. Then there generally was at least one waddy that could agitate the cat gut. Some could make the fiddle sing, and some made it howl, but the boys would take it and be pleased with the howling.